

Medal of Honor Recipients Recognized May 27, 2014 Ceremony

Citations

Specialist Four Leonard L. Alvarado distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a Rifleman with Company D, 2d Battalion, 12th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) during combat operations against an armed enemy in Phuoc Long Province, Republic of Vietnam on August 12, 1969. On that day, as Specialist Four Alvarado and a small reaction force moved through dense jungle en route to a beleaguered friendly platoon, Specialist Four Alvarado detected enemy movement and opened fire. Despite his quick reaction, Specialist Four Alvarado and his comrades were soon pinned down by the hostile force that blocked the path to the trapped platoon. Specialist Four Alvarado quickly moved forward through the hostile machinegun fire in order to engage the enemy troops. Suddenly, an enemy grenade exploded nearby, wounding and momentarily stunning him. Retaliating immediately, he

killed the grenadier just as another enemy barrage wounded him again. Specialist Four Alvarado crawled forward through the fusillade to pull several comrades back within the hastily-formed perimeter. Realizing his element needed to break away from the hostile force, Specialist Four Alvarado began maneuvering forward alone. Though repeatedly thrown to the ground by exploding satchel charges, he continued advancing and firing, silencing several emplacements, including one enemy machinegun position. From his dangerous forward position, he persistently laid suppressive fire on the hostile forces, and after the enemy troops had broken contact, his comrades discovered that he had succumbed to his wounds. Specialist Four Alvarado's extraordinary heroism and selflessness at the cost of his own life, above and beyond the call of duty, are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.

Specialist Four Jesus S. Duran distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty while serving as an acting M-60 machinegunner in Company E, 2d Battalion, 5th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) during combat operations against an armed enemy in the Republic of Vietnam on April 10, 1969. That afternoon, the reconnaissance platoon was moving into an elaborate enemy bunker complex when the lead elements began taking concentrated ambush fire from every side. The command post was in imminent danger of being overrun. With an M-60 machinegun blazing from his hip, Specialist Four Duran rushed forward and assumed a defensive position near the command post. As hostile forces stormed forward, Specialist Four Duran stood tall in a cloud of dust raised by the impacting rounds and bursting grenades directed towards him and thwarted the enemy with devastating streams of machinegun fire. Learning that two seriously wounded troopers lay helplessly pinned down under harassing fire, Specialist Four Duran assaulted the suppressive enemy positions, firing deadly bursts on the run. Mounting

a log, he fired directly into the enemy's foxholes, eliminating four and cutting down several others as they fled. Specialist Four Duran then continued to pour effective fire on the disorganized and fleeing enemy. Specialist Four Duran's extraordinary heroism and selflessness above and beyond the call of duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.

Sergeant Eduardo C. Gomez distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty while serving with Company I, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division during combat operations against an armed enemy in Tabu-dong, Korea on September 3, 1950. That afternoon, while conducting combat patrol, Sergeant Gomez' company was ruthlessly attacked by a hostile force which moved within seventy-five yards of the command post before it was immobilized by rocket fire. However, an enemy tank and multiple

enemy machineguns continued to rake the company perimeter with devastating fire. Realizing the tank posed a serious threat to the entire perimeter, Sergeant Gomez voluntarily crawled thirty yards across an open rice field vulnerable to enemy observation and fire, boarded the tank, pried open one of the hatches on the turret and dropped an activated grenade into the hull, killing the crew. Wounded in the left side while returning to his position, Sergeant Gomez refused evacuation. Observing that the tripod of a .30 caliber machinegun was rendered inoperable by enemy fire, he cradled the weapon in his arms, returned to the forward defensive positions, and swept the assaulting force with withering fire. Although his weapon overheated and burned his hands and his painful wound still bled, Sergeant Gomez maintained his stand and, upon orders to withdraw in the face of overwhelming enemy superiority, remained to provide protective fire. Sergeant Gomez continued to pour accurate fire into the enemy ranks, exacting a heavy toll in casualties and retarding their advance. Sergeant Gomez would not consent to leave his post for medical attention until the

company established new defensive positions. Sergeant Gomez's extraordinary heroism and selflessness above and beyond the call of duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.

Private Joe Gandara distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty while serving with Company D, 2d Battalion, 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 17th Airborne Division during combat operations against an armed enemy in Amfreville, France on June 9, 1944. On that day, Private Gandara's detachment came under devastating enemy fire from a strong German force, pinning the men to the ground for a period of four hours. Private Gandara voluntarily advanced alone toward the enemy position. Firing his machinegun from his hip as he moved forward, he destroyed three hostile machineguns before he was fatally wounded. Private Gandara's extraordinary heroism and selflessness at the cost of his own life, above

and beyond the call of duty, are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.

Private First Class Salvador J. Lara distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty while serving as the Squad Leader of a rifle squad with 2d Platoon, Company L, 180th Infantry, 45th Infantry Division during combat operations against an armed enemy in Aprilia, Italy on May 27 and 28, 1944. On the afternoon of the 27th, Private First Class Lara aggressively led his rifle squad in neutralizing multiple enemy strongpoints and in inflicting large numbers of casualties on the enemy. Having taken his initial objective, Private First Class Lara noticed that the unit to his right was meeting stiff resistance from a large, well-entrenched enemy force in a deep ditch. Private First Class Lara quickly gathered three men and

attacked a wide section of the enemy position, killing four, forcing fifteen others to surrender and causing two enemy mortar crews to abandon their weapons. His fearless and efficient performance enabled both his own unit and the unit to his right to continue to their objective. The next morning, as his company resumed the attack, Private First Class Lara sustained a severe leg wound, but did not stop to receive first aid. His company suffered heavy casualties as a result of withering machinegun fire coming from an enemy strongpoint on the right flank. After requesting permission to destroy the enemy machineguns armed only with a Browning Automatic Rifle, Private First Class Lara crawled alone toward the nearest machinegun. Despite his painful wound and the extreme danger of the task, he rose and fearlessly charged the nest, killing the crew members. Another machinegun opened fire on him, but he quickly neutralized this weapon with accurate fire from his Browning, killing three more of the enemy. His aggressive attack forced two other machinegun crews to flee their weapons. After rejoining his company, Private First Class Lara continued

his exemplary performance until he captured his objective. Private First Class Lara's extraordinary heroism and selflessness above and beyond the call of duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army

Speaker and Special Guest

James Taylor – Representing Medal of Honor Society

Capt. Taylor, Armor, was serving as executive officer of Troop B, 1st Squadron. His troop was engaged in an attack on a fortified position west of Que Son when it came under intense enemy recoilless rifle, mortar, and automatic weapons fire from an enemy strong point located immediately to its front. One armored cavalry assault vehicle was hit immediately by recoilless rifle fire and all 5 crewmembers were wounded. Aware that the stricken vehicle was in grave danger of

exploding, Capt. Taylor rushed forward and personally extracted the wounded to safety despite the hail of enemy fire and exploding ammunition. Within minutes a second armored cavalry assault vehicle was hit by multiple recoilless rifle rounds. Despite the continuing intense enemy fire, Capt. Taylor moved forward on foot to rescue the wounded men from the burning vehicle and personally removed all the crewmen to the safety of a nearby dike. Moments later the vehicle exploded. As he was returning to his vehicle, a bursting mortar round painfully wounded Capt. Taylor, yet he valiantly returned to his vehicle to relocate the medical evacuation landing zone to an area closer to the front lines. As he was moving his vehicle, it came under machinegun fire from an enemy position not 50 yards away. Capt. Taylor engaged the position with his machinegun, killing the 3-man crew. Upon arrival at the new evacuation site, still another vehicle was struck. Once again Capt. Taylor rushed forward and pulled the wounded from the vehicle, loaded them aboard his vehicle, and returned them safely to the evacuation site. His actions of unsurpassed valor were a source of

inspiration to his entire troop, contributed significantly to the success of the overall assault on the enemy position, and were directly responsible for saving the lives of a number of his fellow soldiers. His actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military profession and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.